

Enduring Storms
Job 1

Introduction:

Between the years 1643-1666 (almost 24 years) Joseph Caryl, a Congregationalist minister in England, preached some 250 sermons on Job! In the final lecture he apologizes, saying: "*I have not attained so clear an understanding of some passages.*"

Job leaves us like that because even though the Bible tells us everything God wants us to know, the Bible doesn't tell us everything.

The question 'Why?' is often answered, '*We don't know.*'

But we have learned that one single answer won't satisfy everyone. And one answer leads to other questions. In effect, we are not satisfied with answers. We long for the conclusion, a promised finale found in the Revelation.

The trials of Job are perplexing like that. But there are some things we do know.

We know that a key to understanding the book is found in 1:1 –

There was a man in the land of Uz whose name was Job, and that man was blameless and upright, one who feared God and turned away from evil.

Job 28:28 - *Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom, and to turn away from evil is understanding.*

Job is one of three wisdom books in the Bible along with Proverbs and Ecclesiastes.

Job was not written for Job. He never read it. It's written for us.

What wisdom can we glean from Job?

First: Patience is a Virtue

James 5:11 tells us that Job was a patient man and encourages us to be patient also.

Behold, we consider those blessed who remained steadfast. You have heard of the steadfastness of Job, and you have seen the purpose of the Lord, how the Lord is compassionate and merciful.

Here is another example of the NT giving us a snapshot of an OT video; a microcosm of the metanarrative

Have you noticed that Job began like Genesis?

- a) 1:1-5 – Life is well
- b) 1:6 – Satan shows up
- c) 1:13 – Trials begin

Job's story, like many of the stories of Bible characters, is just a retelling of the Genesis creation/Fall story. As such, we can learn a lot about how God intends us to react to the Fall by

watching Job.

“steadfastness” = *hupomeno* =

- a) Hupo = under
- b) Meno = abide

This is one of the most important words in the Bible. It means to **remain faithful** in hope.

Luke 8:15 – *As for that in the good soil, they are those who, hearing the word, hold it fast in an honest and good heart, and bear fruit with patience.*

Hebrews 10:36 – *For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God you may receive what is promised.*

Second: Satan is a Real Foe. 6

Apart from Genesis 3, Zechariah 3 and Job 1, Satan is absent from the Old Testament.

Satan is not a proper name = *adversary or opponent*. It is used of a prosecuting attorney in Psalm 109:6-7. Even the angel of the Lord who opposes Balaam is called ‘a satan’ (Num 22:22, 32).

- a) Before the Fall - There was a time when this angelic creature was in an unfallen state. He was a high-ranking angel.
- b) The Fall - At some time in the dateless past, Satan decided to rebel against God. Lifted up with pride and selfish ambition, he took 1/3 of the angelic host with him when he rebelled.
- c) His Fall – When this occurred, he lost the favored position that he had with the Lord. He was now Satan, or the "adversary."
- d) Present work - Since his fall, Satan has been a deceiver, encouraging people to disbelieve God.
- e) Defeated by Jesus - As soon as sin entered into our world, the Lord promised to send someone to deal with the problem. The Devil was defeated by Christ in the cross and then at the resurrection.
- f) Present work - Satan is continuing to deceive humanity, as he did the fallen angels, Eve and continues to do.

Genesis 3:1b - *Did God actually say?*

Job 1:9b - *Does Job fear God for no reason?*

This is why the first two things we learn about God from creation is that he is great and good.

He is great – He allows Satan to exist
He is good – He has a reason for Satan to exist

g) Tool of God – Satan is a created being who ultimately serves God

h) At the Great White Throne judgment, Satan will be thrown into the lake of fire where will be punished forever and ever. This will be his ultimate destiny.

Third: God is the only Sovereign

1 – We assume this takes place at God’s throne

6 - *Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came among them.*

After introducing Job, we are immediately transported into the control center of all creation. But the book is not about what happens in heaven but how God works on earth.

All creation takes its orders from God. The seasons and Satan are both under his control.

2 – Even Satan gives an account to God

7 - *The LORD said to Satan, "From where have you come?" Satan answered the LORD and said, "From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking up and down on it."*

(The Lord is no more ignorant of where Satan was than he is of where Adam was. The question is asked to remind Satan that he is accountable to God.)

Dualism is not a biblical concept. Satan is not as powerful as God. He is not omnipresent.

Satan does not have ultimate authority, even over his own actions. He is "reporting" to God. He is not autonomous. His power is delegated. That should tell us immediately that his power is curtailed. He cannot do as he pleases. His malice is checked by God's purposes.

For this reason, Satan exists frustrated. He can never accomplish what he desires. His is limited in his abilities. He is not omnipotent. He is a finite creature. God sets boundaries around what he can and cannot do (1:11; cf. 2:6). God establishes the "rules of engagement." At the close of the Bible we see it again: in Revelation 20 (1:4), Satan is "released for a little while" but again, only to fulfill God's plan and his defeat is certain.

We must never underestimate the reality of Satan or spiritual warfare but we can also make too much of the devil.

3 – It is God who directs Satan to Job

8 - *And the LORD said to Satan, "Have you considered my servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, who fears God and turns away from evil?"*

Trials can be attributed to Satan who does try us. But God is the final authority in our trials. This should be very comforting and encouraging to us. Satan has no power over or equal to God and no real power over Job either. He's like a cardboard cutout character in the story with no strength whose only real role in the book is to raise the questions that are the real focus of this book.

Job doesn't serve God only because God rewards him. Job loves God, more than his own life, his own family or his own comfort.

Job begins with the focus on God and Satan as his servant.

1:12 - *And the LORD said to Satan, "Behold, all that he has is in your hand. Only against him do not stretch out your hand."*

Because he sees God above, behind and in control of everything that befalls him, he maintains a godly attitude throughout the trial

Job 1:20-22 - *Then Job arose and tore his robe and shaved his head and fell on the ground and worshiped. ²¹ And he said, "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return. The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD." ²² In all this Job did not sin or charge God with wrong.*

The book begins as it ends but...WITH MORE...with Job seeing God.

Job 42:1-6 - *I know that you can do all things, and that no purpose of yours can be thwarted.*
³ *'Who is this that hides counsel without knowledge?' Therefore I have uttered what I did not understand, things too wonderful for me, which I did not know.* ⁴ *'Hear, and I will speak; I will question you, and you make it known to me.'* ⁵ *I had heard of you by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees you;* ⁶ *therefore I despise myself, and repent in dust and ashes."*

And with God doubling Job's wealth –

Job 42:10 - *And the LORD restored the fortunes of Job, when he had prayed for his friends. And the LORD gave Job twice as much as he had before.*

What is God doing? God is reconciling all things to himself. What is reconciliation? Restored with MORE.

Here is the promise of Jesus –

Matthew 19:27-29 - *Then Peter said in reply, "See, we have left everything and followed you. What then will we have?"* ²⁸ *Jesus said to them, "Truly, I say to you, in the new world,^[b] when the Son of Man will sit on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.* ²⁹ *And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or lands, for my name's sake, will receive a hundredfold and will inherit eternal life.* ³⁰ *But many who are first will be last, and the last first.*

3 – Satan's goal is God's cursing

1:11 - *But stretch out your hand and touch all that he has, and he will curse you to your face.*

But Job refuses to mistrust God, to love himself more than God.

Job 2:9-11 - *Then his wife said to him, "Do you still hold fast your integrity? Curse God and die."* ¹⁰ *But he said to her, "You speak as one of the foolish women would speak. Shall we receive good from God, and shall we not receive evil?"^[a] In all this Job did not sin with his lips.*

Conclusion:

The book of Job raises some mind-boggling questions and provides only God as the answer. We finish the book unsure of the point but convinced of the profound.

Job never read this book. Unlike James and us, he didn't know the end. But through it all, he trusted God and didn't 'curse' him, even when it could have ended his suffering. As such, Job teaches us how to endure trials.

Community Groups:

1. Read Job 1
2. Give your overview of this chapter.
3. What is most confusing to you about this chapter in Job?
4. What circumstances have you encountered in life for which there is no explanation?
5. What are some reasons why God doesn't answer our every question?
6. How is 'the fear of the Lord' (Job 28:28) the beginning of wisdom?
7. Why is patience a virtue in trials?
8. How does Job 1 mirror Genesis 1-3?
9. What do you know about Satan?

27. What do you know about Satan?

10. What do you learn from Job 1 about Satan?
11. What is Satan's goal in Job's life?
12. What verses in this chapter teach us that Satan is accountable to God?
13. Why might God draw attention to Job?
14. How does God limit Satan's attacks on Job?
15. How does Job respond to these trials?
16. How does God give Job 'more' at the end of his trials?

Some thoughts:

Where is Uz? It is commonly associated with Edom, in southwestern Jordan and Southern Israel.

Lamentations 4:21 - *Rejoice and be glad, O daughter of Edom, you who dwell in the land of Uz;*



God foreordains everything that comes to pass.
Trials and sin come to pass.
But God is not the author of sin.
God does not tempt us to sin.
God does not condone sin.